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First to Last—the Truth: News—Editorials—Advertisements

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"Victorious" Germany

At the moment when the campaign of 1917 is reaching its climax it is well to recall again what its objectives are, since we are presently to be confronted by a German manœuvre which, assigning false objectives, will seek to establish the idea that the Allies have failed. The whole world is pretty fairly familiar now with the present German strategy. It aims at a desperate and final defensive which shall prevent a military decision this year and thus pave the way for a peace by negotiation.

Since the Allies took the offensive, on July 1, 1916, the Allied objective has been steadily to wear down German resistance and German resources by local attacks with limited purposes until such time as Germany should be compelled either to shorten her lines or to hold them so thinly that she would face the same kind of collapse that came to Lee in the spring of 1865.

It was essential that the Allies should first establish a moral superiority over the German on the battlefield. Thanks to superior equipment and better training, the German had, during the first year and a half of trench war, fought at an advantage, not always conceded by the troops who faced him, but of infinite value because it was accepted by his own troops; thanks to heavy artillery, superior munitions, better trench weapons, the German had the advantage right up to the moment of the Battle of the Somme. He had also regained the offensive when he began his tremendous but ultimately unsuccessful drive upon Verdun.

Looking backward over fourteen months, what have the Allies on the Western front accomplished and what will be the harvest of the present year? The answer is simple. First of all, they have asserted a material superiority; they have more guns, more ammunition; better guns and better ammunition. The German used to rely upon his heavy artillery, but his heavy artillery is now unable to meet the enemy, not shot for shot, but one shot for two, or one shot for three. Despite certain temporary interruptions the Allies have also been able to assert superiority in the air and to interrupt German observation.

Next, they have established a moral superiority, and the measure of this achievement is to be found in certain battles. Thus, since the French and British took the offensive on the Somme, on July 1 of last year, there have been fought these considerable engagements: The Somme, the French offensives at Verdun, Arras, Rheims, the contest now going forward about Ypres, and, finally, the recent offensive attack at Verdun.

At the Battle of the Somme the British and the French together took 85,000 prisoners. In their two offensives in October and December of last year at Verdun the French took 17,000 prisoners. At Arras, in April of this year, the British took 30,000 prisoners, and in their fight east and west of Rheims in the same month and in the next the French took 35,000 prisoners. So far the British have captured 16,000 prisoners at Ypres and 2,000 about Lens, and the French bag of prisoners in the recent Verdun attack already passes 9,000. In fourteen months, then, in battle the French and British Allies have taken more than 195,000 prisoners on the Western front, and the captures in minor skirmishes swell this total well beyond 200,000.

Aside from the capture of prisoners there are other standards of measurement. More than one thousand guns, heavy and field, have been taken in battle from the Germans, while the total loss of the British in guns during the entire war has been under one hundred. At Arras alone the British took about 225 guns, many of them heavy. The capture of machine guns and war material, particularly at Arras, was enormous.

Now there are yet other evidences. When the Allies began their attack in 1916 the Germans held all the important high ground positions from the Channel to the Argonne. The Anglo-French offensive at the Somme compelled the Germans to relinquish a thousand square miles of France, including the strong and heavily fortified ridge between Arras and Péronne and the high ground west of the Oise about Noyon. The French attacks last year about Verdun retook Douaumont and Vaux, the two forts captured by the Germans. The recent attack has retaken Dead Man's Hill and Hill 304 and every position of military importance held by the French before the great German assault in February, 1916. In Flanders the British and French have retaken Pilkem Ridge, the British have recaptured Wytschaete Ridge, the Canadians have taken Vimy Heights and Hill No. 70. North of the Aisne the French have captured the high ground traversed by the Chemin-des-Dames, and east of Rheims they have taken the Moronvilliers Hills, which were perhaps the best of all observation and gun positions along the whole front from the Vosges to the sea.

If you should take a map of the Western front and indicate the points of Anglo-French gain you would see that the Germans have gone backward from their selected positions in almost every sector save that about La Bassée, from Ypres as far eastward as Rheims; and beyond Rheims, in Champagne and in Lorraine, they have also suffered material losses whose importance is not measured by the amount of ground recaptured but by the character of the ground itself.

As the fourth year of the war begins the steady recoil of the German line in France is patent; the superiority of the Allies is demonstrated in the ever-growing number of important places captured; the supremacy of Allied artillery and of Allied tactics is revealed in the contrast between the German failure at Verdun and the successes of the Allies at the Somme and elsewhere. The German soldier stands on a constantly receding line, exposed to artillery fire several times stronger than that of his guns; he is condemned to see his effectives melt away because he is outnumbered and outgunned, and he has begun to surrender in numbers which would be impressive in any war except the present and are already beginning to be significant in this contest involving the manhood of all nations.

Now the German is making a desperate effort to influence both the Allies and the public of the world. He is endeavoring to establish the idea that his line cannot be broken and that incidental retirements do not affect his main strength. He is steadily assigning objectives for his enemies which were not the objectives of their commanders, and he habitually alleges successes when the enemy fail to reach not their objectives but his. He tries to make the world believe his line is impregnable because he knows that he will next year lack the men to man it and that it will collapse if there is a campaign of 1918. He hopes that the weak-hearted, the faint-hearted, those whose horror of war is their dominating emotion, will be so impressed by his defence this year that they will use their influence to compel a peace by negotiation this winter. If he fails in this he knows that, with American troops added to Anglo-French numbers, even if Russia fails to take the offensive, he will face a military defeat and an absolute military decision in the West some time between May and September of next year.

Exactly the same sort of operation was carried on in the Civil War when Grant, in his great campaign from the Rapidan to the James, failed to destroy Lee's armies and achieve an absolute decision. The South, from its shaking walls, still thundered forth the same defiances and still proclaimed the same invincibility which now falls from the lips of the German Emperor and is echoed by every German agent and sympathizer all over the world. Yet it requires only the slightest examination of the statistics for the past fourteen months of the war to demonstrate how rapidly and how unmistakably the German defeat is coming. A military decision next summer can be avoided by the German only if he succeeds in imposing his view of Allied strategy upon the Allied nations and the United States and Russia both fail to play a part in the campaign of 1918.

The Dwindling Home

Your real estate investor has never heard of Ellen Key, and Greenwich Village is to him only a place where tenants are flighty and everything must be called a studio to rent speedily. But what the public wants forms his creed and Bible; and when he moves, you can be sure that at least his investment represents what he thinks the public is crying for. If the order is onyx for the hallways, it is because he conceives the public to be lusting after onyx with a passion that nothing else will satisfy.

So the news that apartment hotels are on the increase and that small suite apartments are rapidly growing in favor has a real moral. The two developments represent the dwindling home, yielding up its ghost in two different directions, to be sure, yet dwindling, none the less. The apartment hotel usually represents a house or a large scale apartment surrendered before the spectre of the servant problem. The breaking point has been reached in any number of families since the war began. The comforts of one's own kitchen and service and hallway and perhaps dining room reached a price in discomfort and dismay and insult and wasted æons passed in employment agencies which seemed not worth the sacrifice. The small suite apartment usually means one servant or none in place of two or three or four. The home is preserved intact so far as privacy and individuality go. The sacrifice is of extra rooms and some leisure, for the small suite usually represents the undertaking of some housework, at any rate, by the housewife.

The apartment hotel is community living on an expensive scale as the solution of the servant problem. The small suite offers light housekeeping as the solution. The latter undoubtedly preserves more of the old home spirit. Neither helps that large class of home dwellers, the suburbanites, in the slightest. Economic pressure is hitting the home where it is most vulnerable and most easily supplanted. In its stronghold, the country, the home still stumbles on its way, with no real estate man bold enough to raise his hand against it.

Mr. Shonts and His Public

It is not much that our jostled, panting public expects of Mr. Shonts. The request of the mate to his captain, "Only a little common politeness, and damned little of that," about sums up the demand. But common politeness, treatment that is really polite and not merely skin deep courtesy, is something of which the Interborough has endless mysteries to explore.

It discovered a few months ago that there was such a word as courtesy in the English language, and was evidently much impressed by the fame and good will that other railroads were winning in its name. But it apparently never realized for a moment that the essence of courtesy was service, a desire to please, and that railroads, like the Pennsylvania, which have converted courtesy into a tremendously valuable asset have done so by a long, hard effort to serve the public. Mr. Shonts began quite at the other end by posting up neatly printed arguments pointing out what wonderful things his company was doing, despite the carelessness and inconsiderateness of the travelling public. Of inward and spiritual grace a willing public saw no faintest hint, and of superficial civility on the part of employes there were beginning traces, perhaps, but nothing surely to boast of.

Now it turns out in the coal episode that the attitude of the public toward Mr. Shonts's placards was entirely right. The little sermons on the wonders of the Interborough represented no reversal of Interborough policy, no realization of public obligation, no new and enlightened treatment of its patrons. The road was, and is, an efficient and economic private enterprise. For so much we can well be appreciative and thankful. But there it stops. Neither Mr. Hedley nor Mr. Shonts seems to have achieved the slightest conception of duty to the public. All the while Mr. Shonts was busy pinning courtesy medals on his road he was permitting the grossest inconsiderateness of public convenience in the matter of coal reserves, standing ready months on end to sacrifice public comfort and business to the chance of saving a little something on his coal bill.

Mr. Shonts should stop his window-dressing and take a few lessons in common obligation to the public.

Dress a War Factor

(From The Dry Goods Economist)

We cannot win the war by wearing crape. Instead of spreading depression, creating discouragement, it is our duty—it should be our privilege—to maintain a high heart, to vitalize the fighting spirit, to do all that lies in our power to keep our country in trim for the further efforts, the further trials that it must face before final victory shall perch on its banners and on those of its allies. And we feel very sure that every one of our heroes who shall fall in the sacred cause of freedom would infinitely prefer that he were honored not by the conventional change in garb, but only in the inner sanctuary of the heart and of the memory.

The present shortage of fabrics is equalled only by the shortage of raw materials entering into the manufacture of textiles. This shortage must necessarily increase as the war continues. The adoption of mourning by a large number of our people would entail the discarding of great quantities of clothing which otherwise might have been worn for a considerable period. True, some of these cast-offs might be given to the poor or to charitable organizations. But the probability is that the greater proportion of them would be put away in some closet, to become moth-eaten and forgotten. The result of the new purchases would be to increase the already serious shortage of material and to further raise the prices of clothing, which, as it is, promise to soar still higher in the near future.

Altogether, the arguments in favor of the discarding of mourning during the continuance of the war appear to us to be unanswerable except in the affirmative. We by no means urge the indiscriminate wearing of bright or showy colors. Neutral or soft shades would naturally be more appropriate. Some suitable device also might be worn upon the sleeve. But for "the customary suits of solemn black" there should be no place under war conditions.

"Who Counsels Peace?"

(From a Poem by Robert Southey)

Who counsels peace at this momentous hour
When God hath given deliverance to the opprest
And to the injured power?
Who counsels peace, when vengeance like a flood
Rolls on, no longer now to be represt:—
When innocent blood
From the four corners of the world cries out
For justice upon one accursed head.

. . . . . .

Woe, woe to all, both woe and endless shame
If this heroic land,
False to her feelings and unspotted fame,
Holds out the olive to the Tyrant's hand.

. . . . . .

Down with the Tyrant: with the Murderer down.

Maintaining Democracy

A Defence of Free Speech and the Stockholm Conference

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Absent in the Orient for six months, I return to America with a temporary perspective which may lend to comment from me a certain value it would not otherwise possess.

I found that one of the first orders given in instruction to soldiers of my acquaintance at the Presidio in San Francisco was, "Don't think," a principle which would appear to me to have been seized upon also by certain civilians in New York. For I should judge one of its results to be the unintelligence of Mr. Cleveland Moffett and others of the Vigilantes in advertising and martyrizing opinions they intend to suppress.

But, apart from these intentions, should we not all be exercising the gravest care as Americans, for the sake of our cause, to maintain at home the facts of democracy for which we are fighting abroad? America, as far as I know, has as yet in this war no allies, not even France or Russia. We scrupulously abstain from participation in allied conferences—presumably to reserve to ourselves, even with fellow republics, freedom of judgment and conduct. As to Great Britain, am I exposing myself to an unfriendly visit from the Vigilantes when I ask why Great Britain would not concur in Mr. Wilson's recent declaration of democratic sympathy toward China, why Great Britain appears now to have misrepresented Russian official intentions and desires and blocked knowledge of them not only from us, but from her own people, and why Mr. Root and Mr. Russell, in opposing American representation in the Stockholm conference, should presume to know Russian advantage better than Kerensky, who has insisted again and again, and still insists, that obstacles thrown in the way of delegations from democratic countries to the Stockholm Conference will be "playing into German hands"?

Is it sedition to ask Mr. Moffett or any other passerby why we should follow British imperial stupidity and play against Russia into German hands? Is it treason to ask why we should not do anything we can, now and always, at Stockholm and anywhere else, "to make the world safe for democracy"?

WITTER BYNNER.

New York, Aug. 23, 1917.

Capital Necessary, Capitalists Not

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: It seems strange in these enlightened days that there is still a man so ignorant as your correspondent from Amherst about one of the greatest political movements of the age, socialism. He seems to think that socialists wish to abolish capital, and gravely argues that capital is necessary. He evidently thinks that socialists are idiots; but it is a serious reflection on his own intelligence to suppose that a movement so immense, which numbers its adherents by millions, could be based on such an evident absurdity. It is like the old argument that government is necessary, therefore we must have kings and aristocrats. Of course, capital is necessary, but capitalists are not. If the nation owned the capital, liberty loans would not be necessary. The nation could finance the war out of its own purse. Privately owned capital is the greatest obstacle to the successful prosecution of the war.

Confiscation in the form of forced loans or taxation will be necessary to make the rich do without the incomes that must be devoted to military expenses. The incomes of the poor cannot be taken, therefore the incomes of the rich must be taken. Whether we will or not, wealth must be socialized or Germany will win. ARCHIBALD CRAIG.

Jersey City, N. J., Aug. 23, 1917.

The Price of Peace and Pacifism

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Referring to the letter published in to-day's Tribune under the title "The Conscientious Objector," let me state my conscientious objection to witnessing such a dastardly crime as the hailing of Jesus Christ as "chief of pacifists."

The Prince of Peace may be an honorable title depending on the kind of peace designated, but one thing is certain, and that is, it does not mean a German peace, dictated by pacifists.

Jesus Christ was a man of infinite courage and honor, a champion of the weak and oppressed and an advocate of force when love proved unavailing. He scourged the thieving money changers from the Temple, and it was not a pacifist's job. He will be with the nations who are fighting to overpower the cowardly despoilers of Belgium and will bless the souls of those with the supreme courage to die for a principle even as He died.

STANLEY M. BACHMAN.

New York, Aug. 24, 1917.

"Failure of Price Fixing in U. S."

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: The most telling contribution that has been made to the economic discussions of the war is contained in Carl Snyder's article in to-day's Tribune, entitled "Failure of Price Fixing Is Inevitable." A copy of this article should be put into the hands of every Congressman and member of the government in Washington, including Mr. Hoover.

One of the interesting matters to which Mr. Snyder calls attention is the fact that there is not a government murmur at paying the cotton grower 27 cents for his cotton, while the farmer is forbidden to get more than $2 for his wheat. Why is this? Is it on the basic theory that we may be able to live without clothes, but we cannot live without bread?

LAWRENCE GODKIN.

New York, Aug. 26, 1917.

"Buddy"

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: I have seen in the papers from time to time letters suggestive as to the name by which the American soldier should be recognized abroad. The newspapers persist in calling him "Sammy." This name does not seem to have the right punch in it. I know a great many soldiers, some of whom have seen considerable service, and I have noticed that one soldier in addressing another always refers to him as "Buddy." Frequently I have heard one soldier say to another, "Buddy, give us a match," or "Give us the 'makin's,' Buddy."

What's the matter with calling the boys by the name they all know—Buddy?

JAMES K. BYRNE.

New York, Aug. 25, 1917.

Buy the Congo

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Belgium will find a billion dollars very convenient after the war for the restoration of her shattered land. Why could we not give her this sum for her Congo Free State, in Africa? We could then offer a free farm homestead to each of our colored fellow citizens as an inducement to emigrate. We would thus secure several desirable ends at the same time—the restoration of Belgium, the solution of our trying race problem and the giving of the negro a chance to build up a republic of his own under a United States protectorate.

WILLIAM G. BELL.

Philadelphia, Aug. 25, 1917.

Soldiers' Insurance Once More

By George Clarke Cox, Ph. D.

Mr. F. Spencer Baldwin's communication in your issue of August 21, entitled "Against Group Insurance," suspects me of being academic and unacquainted with the practical side of the problem, so that the "lay mind" is confused by me. In reply to this, permit me to confess that I have had much to do with colleges, and am to that extent academic, but to say, also, that I have been for two years a practical insurance man, though I am not an official of any company.

Mr. Baldwin says that "apparently the writer [myself] sets out to criticise the proposed system of governmental insurance and family allowance for soldiers and sailors on the ground of expense," etc. Mr. Baldwin has misread me. Not only was my article written some days before the bill was made public, but I quite heartily approve of most of the provisions of that bill and should deeply regret to see it fail. It will have my earnest support in nearly all of its provisions.

Mr. Baldwin objects to group insurance. But all insurance is, properly understood, group insurance, since no man can be insured by himself. He certainly cannot object that I would be parsimonious, since he points out that my plan would cost more than that advocated in the bill. I have no desire to be controversial, but Mr. Baldwin has challenged one of my statements: "That the representatives of the insurance companies who were called into consultation on the problem of war insurance declined to assume the risk at all, and recommended that the government insure the soldiers." "This," he adds, "would be extremely interesting and significant if true"; and then he quotes Secretary McAdoo's communication to the President in submitting the tentative bill, in which the opposition of the insurance companies to Article IV of the proposed bill is somewhat stressed.

The Companies Did Decline

Now, my statement was that "the companies declined to assume the risk and recommended that the government insure the soldiers." The companies most assuredly did decline to assume the risk. A prominent insurance official said on July 3, presenting the opinion of his company: "No part of the new insurance for our fighting forces can be paid from the funds of our present policyholders. The entire mortality cost must come from the premiums on the highly hazardous class insured. This cost must either be paid by the men themselves, by the men and the government combined, or by the government alone.

"All that the life insurance companies can consistently offer the government in this case is the use of their organizations and machinery at actual cost.

"If the companies should be given this work a safe charge must be made. If the actual cost should fall below the amount collected the excess should be returned at the end of the war, and the government should guarantee to make good the deficiency if the charges proved inadequate to cover the cost."

There had been at that time no suggestion on the part of the government that soldiers should be required to pay anything, so that the attitude of insurance officials must be interpreted with this in mind. "The question of what would be the best course to pursue and what would be the attitude of the companies if there were inserted in the bill any benefits in connection with which the enlisted man paid part or all of the premiums or cost was not presented to the conference." (Statement of George E. Ide, July 15, chairman of the insurance committee appointed by the Secretary of the Treasury.) This seems to me to confirm my claim that the insurance companies declined to assume the risk.

As for the statement that the companies advised the government itself to insure soldiers, this is in no wise invalidated by the undeniable fact that they did not advise what is contained in Article IV of the bill. That is another matter to which I will shortly turn. What the companies in effect advised, as can be proved from the remarks of Mr. Ide, before referred to, was, though I did not know it at the time, practical group insurance of the kind advocated by me—namely, a death benefit of $1,000 or more, all cost to be assumed by the government, with no premiums payable or collectible.

The companies, as it is plain to see, did advise against the insurance provision of Article IV. They could not well do otherwise without stultifying themselves as insurance men, for the proposition is thoroughly unsound.

It is not insurance as ordinarily understood at all, since the insured in no sense is paying for value received. He is paying a very small part; no one knows how small, since war risks are not at present to be computed; he is paying for no part of administration and for none of the ordinary loan or cash surrender values which form a part of ordinary insurance. The $7 or $8 a thousand cited as net cost is merely the net premium on a term basis, and takes no account of legitimate "loading" entirely aside from the commissions of agents. The objections to this as an insurance provision are too numerous and technical to be entered upon here. But there is no objection to a death indemnity of $1,000 or more on the group plan whereby the soldiers pay no part of the cost. Let us indemnify our defenders to the limit of our power to do it, but let us not call insurance that which is something entirely different.

Very Sketchy Cost

I find that the cost of the whole scheme is dealt with very sketchily. We cannot assume that only a small portion of the soldiers will take the "insurance"; and if all should take it the increased cost over the amount estimated in the bill would be some hundreds of millions of dollars. Moreover, the cost of administration and the difficulties of administration, which would be enormously increased by the proposed insurance feature, have been set forth in a somewhat casual fashion.

For example, Mr. McAdoo's statement of the cost of insurance for the first year is $23,000,000; $112,500,000 for the second year. Mr. Wolfe, actuary for the government, has explained frankly that these figures are based upon 25 per cent of the soldiers taking insurance, and taking it for only $2,500 each. Now, if every one of the soldiers should take the maximum amount the cost would be the first year $368,000,000 and the second year $1,800,000,000. What it would be the third year heaven only knows. Of course, I recognize that it is extremely unlikely that the total number would take the total amount. But this, at least, ought to be stated. (See page 67. H. R. 5723.)

Are there no "watch dogs of the Treasury" any more? It is very well to propose to be generous to our defenders. No one wants to be other than generous. But the indemnity provisions, modelled upon and closely following the workmen's compensation laws of various states, are already generous beyond anything known. If these were supplemented by a death indemnity of $1,000 or $3,000, according to rank and pay—the only feasible democratic way—we should be dealing with those who risk all for us as generously as we have the power to deal. This plan proposes to care for soldiers without getting into a pension scandal and muddle beyond anything in the past.

General Plan Is Admirable

The bill as a whole is well conceived and admirable. It is not just to accuse of niggardliness or lack of patriotism those who criticise it in the spirit of helpfulness. And it will be, to my mind, a great disaster if the insurance companies, for fear of being misunderstood, refrain from such criticism. They are the experts in this line. I do not believe that they are hostile in any way. Their approval of the $1,000 or more death indemnity is an approval of my suggestion for group insurance, an approval of which I was unaware, and it is therefore the more grateful. In so far as this is insurance of a kind practised by many of the largest companies, it seems to me that my second claim is made good, viz., that the companies advised the government itself to insure soldiers—all the more because they advise that the entire cost be met by the government.

What Mr. Baldwin says about the new régime does not seem to me pertinent to this subject, for no one has criticised the compensation and indemnity side of the bill, except in details. We all want to protect the soldiers, but we want to face the cost fully. Then alone can we take steps to meet it.

A Potato Complaint

The Farmer's Predicament as Costs Go Up and Prices Down

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: According to the present market price for potatoes, it would appear that farmers who depend on potatoes as a main crop have been betrayed.

The insistence of the Administration that enormous crops be planted and the intimation that the price would be guaranteed at a figure sufficiently high to insure a fair profit have had the effect of causing such a huge crop to be planted that potatoes are a drug on the market at $2.25 a barrel to-day and going down, having dropped $1 in two days.

It looks as though the experience of 1915 was going to be repeated, when there was such a huge crop that the bulk of it sold for 60 cents a barrel, which, even to people who do not know anything about farming, must seem ridiculously low. In 1915 we lost money; 1916 put us on our feet again, for although we did not get $10 a barrel we did get from $2 to $3, which was a very fair price last year.

This year labor is scarce and high. Fertilizer is higher, and promises to be $60 or better next year. In fact, the fertilizer companies want us to contract at $55 immediate delivery, and say that the price may go even higher. Potatoes are bringing $2.25 to-day, which about covers production, with a very small margin of profit. Now, where do you figure next year's crop is coming from? Certainly, we farmers don't intend to risk a lot of money in planting something there is no money in. We are as patriotic as the next man, but we must live, so there you are.

The wheat growers of the nation have had their price guaranteed at a good figure, and I can't see any reason why we potato men, after all the lecturing and all the advice, should not be insured against loss through the same method.

The farmers here are going to plant one-quarter of the acreage for next year which they have planted this year and put the remainder of the ground in corn and wheat, on the latter of which the price is guaranteed.

With fertilizer at $32 (we use a ton to the acre) and seed and labor at the price they were before the war, we could make good money at $1.50, but when you consider fertilizer at $60 a ton we absolutely must receive a dollar a bushel, or quit and go into some other line of farming. If the Administration would guarantee that price we could go ahead and be assured of a decent profit this year, but since everything keeps going up we would have to get $1.25 for the 1918 crop, or suffer a loss on that.

WILLIAM M'FARLAND.

Hazlet, N. J., Aug. 23, 1917.

That Fleet of Destroyers

Why It Will Have Difficulty in Becoming the Greatest

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Being born and having lived for some years a few miles from Portsmouth naval dockyard, England, I naturally take an interest in the British navy and the other navies of the world. I must admit I was somewhat amused at the recent hyperbole appearing in some of the leading daily papers of this city relative to destroyers to be built in this country. Please do not think I am depreciating what the country is doing and going to do for the Allies, but on reference to various books in my possession I would like to quote a few figures which might be of interest to the numerous readers of your excellent paper.

According to the navy book, printed and published by "The London Times" in 1914, the British navy had in commission 223 destroyers, plus 15 building; total of 238. The United States navy had, according to the "World 1917 Almanac," on July 1, 1916, 74 destroyers, giving the British navy a lead of 164. Since the war began with Germany, in 1914, no figures of the additions to the British navy have been given out, but I think I am right in assuming the additions of this particular fighting craft must be beyond all expectations. Supposing that the figures I have quoted are reliable, it will take some time and money before the United States navy overtakes that of Great Britain, or even Germany, which, on July 1, 1914, had 154 in commission.

Before closing I would like to refer to another point. A few weeks ago I read a letter in another New York daily in which the writer mentioned the peerless gunnery of the United States fleet. Again I have figures before me, published by "The New York Times," of the spring practice of the battleship fleet in 1915, and I give your readers the results of the first one-half dozen ships.

Ship.	Calibre of gun.	Shots fired.	Hits.
New York	14-inch	70	12
Texas	14-inch	70	8
Delaware	12-inch	70	5
Arkansas	12-inch	84	9
Wyoming	12-inch	84	11
Utah	12-inch	70	6

Which gives a percentage of 8.78 hits per ship. In all fairness one can hardly call this peerless when the British navy, as far back as 1906, had a percentage of hits made to rounds fired of 71.12. I know "comparisons are odious," but a little light at times on these subjects gives one food for reflection. WYKEHAMIST.

New York, Aug. 25, 1917.

The Burden of the Dog

With So Many Evils in the World, Why Imagine This One?

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: The letter of W. G. Grenshaw, "The Burden of the Dog," is both ridiculous, inaccurate and inhuman. To begin with, we are not cursed with hydrophobia all over the country. Not a single case has ever come under my personal observation, and I have lived North, South, East and West. I have always taken a keen interest in dogs and the Humane Society, and have been a dog owner all my life.

As a member of an English family it strikes me as particularly funny that Mr. Grenshaw should instance Great Britain as putting this country to shame in the matter of sheep raising and call on Americans to destroy all dogs, that we may equal England's showing! It is to laugh! Nowhere in the world is there to be found such a genuine, intense and general love of dogs as exists throughout the British Isles among all classes of people. Literally everybody has one, usually, in fact, three or four, not to speak of all the great hunting packs.

Yet Mr. Grenshaw admits these dog loving, dog owning people have succeeded in raising in their small islands 30,000,000 sheep, while we raise only 50,000,000 in all our vast territory. There is apparently a link lost in Mr. Grenshaw's chain of thought.

The trouble in this country has never been the number of dogs kept, but failure to enforce the existing dog laws.

No man who is a dog lover can feel anything but pity for a man who seeks to weigh in dollars and cents that immense sum total of love, devotion and comfort that these dumb friends of ours bring into our lives.

Mr. Grenshaw, if he is really interested in saving this country from financial loss, might, I may suggest, turn his attention to vast expenditures that bring no return but misery and broken lives—to drink problems, to drug and patent medicine problems, to dance hall evils, and so on ad infinitum. He might even include in his investigations the German nation. There are so many great evils it seems strange that any sensible man should just now go out of his way to imagine one. J. WOODWARD.

New York, Aug. 24, 1917.

A Tribute in Rebuttal

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: In reply to W. G. Grenshaw's article on "The Burden of the Dog" may I quote "Senator Vest's Tribute to a Dog"?

"Gentlemen of the jury, the best friend a man has in the world may turn against him and become his enemy. His son or daughter that he has reared with loving care may prove ungrateful. Those who are nearest and dearest to us, those whom we trust with our happiness and good name, may become recreant to their faith. The money that a man has he may lose. It flies away from him perhaps when he needs it most. A man's reputation may be sacrificed in a moment of ill-considered action. The people who are prone to fall on their knees to do us honor when success is with us may be the first to throw the stone of malice when failure settles its cloud upon our heads.

"The one absolutely unselfish friend that a man can have in this selfish world, the one that never deserts him, the one that never proves ungrateful or treacherous, is his dog. A man's dog stands by him in prosperity and in poverty, in health and in sickness. He will sleep on the cold ground, where the wintry winds blow and the snow drives fiercely, if only he may be near his master's side. He will kiss the hand that has no food to offer. He will lick the wounds and sores that come in encounter with the roughness of the world. He guards the sleep of his pauper master as if he were a prince. When all other friends desert he remains. When riches take wings and reputation falls to pieces he is as constant in his love as the sun in its journeys through the heavens. If fortune drives the master forth an outcast in the world, friendless and homeless, the faithful dog asks no higher privilege than that of accompanying him, to guard against danger, to fight against his enemies.

"And when the last scene of all comes and death takes the master in its embrace, and his body is laid away in the cold ground, no matter if all other friends pursue their way, there by his graveside will the noble dog be found—his head between his paws, his eyes sad but open in alert watchfulness, faithful and true even in death."

Mrs. MYRON W. ROBINSON.

Hackensack, N. J., Aug. 24, 1917.

On the Side of Mutton

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: In to-day's Tribune I notice that one of your correspondents, Anne Henrietta Kahan, asks "Please tell me how dogs prevent the nation from having sheep," and adds that she wants the "information to be specific, not general." I would suggest to Miss Kahan that she drop a postcard to the Secretary of Agriculture at Washington, D. C., and ask for a copy of the Agricultural Department Bulletin entitled "The Sheep Killing Dog." She will find the information given in this bulletin to be specific, and the United States government vouches for its accuracy. It would be well if others who credit their dogs with qualities and virtues usually only considered as being possessed by human beings would read this bulletin.

It would be far better if about ninety-nine per cent of the dogs of this country were buried under some fruit tree or vine. We could have more fruit and a great deal more mutton. E. B. DELL.

Brewster, N. Y., Aug. 25, 1917.

Why Should Postage Stamps Be Scarce?

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Recently it has happened that I have wanted to buy postage stamps in quite large numbers; not thousands at one time, but anywhere from one hundred to five hundred. In a city like New York, with its great quantity of postoffice sub-stations in drug stores and department stores, one would think this rather a simple matter, but such is not the case. I went to three sub-stations, and in each one was told that it was impossible to get more than one hundred stamps; that if I wanted more it was necessary to go to one of the main postoffices.

I would be very glad if some one would explain why it is not possible to buy more postage stamps at a sub-station of the United States postoffice. J. M. T.

New York, Aug. 23, 1917.

No Silly Nickname

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: People are trying to select a suitable nickname for the soldiers, and I want to say that it will be impossible for a nickname to be forced upon them. The soldiers will get a nickname before the war is over and no one will ever know where it originated. Such silly nicknames as some suggest will never stick. Being a soldier myself, just call us "roughnecks" and cut out such silly nicknames as some suggest, especially "Sammies." R. L. MOORE.

Y. M. C. A., U. S. Reservation, Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn, Aug. 26, 1917.